



Growing through times of change

Week 9 - Nurturing hope



St Paul's
LUTHERAN CHURCH BOX HILL

*Imagine life without hope: The difference between things being **hopeful** and things being **hopeless**.*

Hope causes us to look forward – not with worry and anxiety but with anticipation and positivity. It brings a sense of something more. Something good. Something I desire.

We hope for all kind of things. For things that make our life a little easier and more enjoyable and for things that hold significance in our lives. Sometimes hope requires that we dig a bit deeper in order to trust that there will be a good outcome.

Hope is most difficult to hold in times of loss and pain and despair. Judith Rich has described this hope when she says: "Hope is a match in a dark tunnel, a moment of light, just enough to reveal the path ahead and ultimately the way out."

What enables us to nurture hope? To dig a bit deeper. To find a firmer footing.

Hope requires our imagination. Imagination enables us to perceive how what might be, can grow from what is. Hope is fed when our imagination aligns with our positive emotions, causing us to open our eyes wider and let possibility dance at the corners of our lives.

Hope requires patience. It needs to be able to sit in the tension of accepting what is, with the possibility of what might be – without any certainty. It is based on a determination to pursue this sense of trust and belief for as long as necessary.

Hope requires courage. It invites us to be willing to step beyond the confines and familiarity of what is, into the strangeness and unknown of what lies ahead. It asks us to have the courage to step into the unknown with the belief that our path will lead us to a worthwhile destination.

Hope requires practice. The skill of hope is dependent upon how well we have learned its characteristics and how often we have practiced its ways. We must practice and practice and practice the art of hope until it comes to us as a valid option at every choice point.

Hope requires intention. We have to want to hope. We have to want our lives to be framed by the belief that there is meaning and purpose in every aspect of our experience. To have a willingness to bring acceptance and optimism into every situation.

Hope requires vigilance. In a world where so much of our dialogue and communication depicts threat and fear, we have to be alert and watchful for opportunities to counteract these with hope and possibility. To find the light in the shadow so that we have the joy of seeking out these opportunities in order to bring greater light into our world.

Hope requires faith. Faith enables us to set our hope on something that is beyond ourselves and gives meaning and perspective outside of our own experience. With faith comes a sense of belonging, comfort and assurance that gives life and substance to our hope and helps to heal our hearts, souls and lives.

We all know hope. We know it far more in our hearts and souls than we do in our heads. It is a surge of life and energy that is not confined to the here and now, but fills us with a wondrous sense of possibility. If we allow ourselves to notice it, attune to what it is inviting us to, and have the courage to follow its lead, hope can lead the way through the changes and challenges that life will inevitably bring. It gives us a promise of a future - and a place for each of us to dwell within that promise.